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Lithograph of Stuart Hall

HISTORY OF STUART HALL

by Martha Dabney Jones

As part of Stuart Hall's 125th anniversary celebration I am asking you to look back with me beyond the founding of Stuart Hall to the seeds of that founding and the soil in which they germinated.

Staunton was a small town in the 1830s and not a prepossessing one. For the residences along Frederick Street, which in the next decade would boast both Augusta Female Seminary and Virginia Female Institute, there was no sidewalk whatever. Travel to and through Staunton was by wagon train, stagecoach, or private carriage; for the Virginia Central Railroad, now the Chesapeake and Ohio, did not extend as far west as Staunton till 1854.

But though Staunton still had many of the characteristics of a frontier town, it was not unmindful of education—even "female education." In 1831 Mrs. Maria Sheffey opened a school for girls in her home, The Kalorama, now the Staunton Public Library. In 1842 Augusta County Presbyterians founded the Augusta Female Seminary, now Mary Baldwin College, and soon afterwards various gentlemen of Trinity Church began planning toward an Episcopal school for girls.

The year of the founding of Stuart Hall is variously cited as 1843 and 1844, depending upon one's interpretation of the word *founding*. The earliest minutes of its Trustees record the accomplishments of a meeting of "the friends of Mrs. Sheffey's school" on New Year's Day, 1844, at which the amount of progress gave evidence of considerable prior activity. Thirteen gentlemen were elected trustees;* the school was named The Virginia Female Institute; the Rev. James McElroy and Mrs. Maria Sheffey were elected joint principals; several teachers were appointed; and a committee was delegated "to draft a circular and advertisement."

Less than two weeks later on January 13, 1844, the General Assembly of Virginia declared The Virginia Female Institute "a body politic incorporate, with the Capital of Thirty Thousand Dollars in shares of One Hundred Dollars each." The list of original stockholders includes twenty from Staunton and Augusta

*The Rev. T. T. Castleman, John H. Peyton, A. H. H. Stuart, Robert S. Brooks, James Points, Washington Swoope, Francis T. Stribling, John B. Breckinridge, William Kinney, Thomas J. Michie, John Churchman, Edmund Berkeley, and Nicholas C. Kinney.

County, ten from Richmond and Richmond County, and the rest from various localities in Virginia except for a surprising fifteen from Baltimore. Enough stock having been sold by May, 1845, the corporation was launched with the Rt. Rev. William Meade as its first president.

Arrangements for the opening of the new school in September, 1844, had progressed throughout the preceding months. In February the trustees negotiated with Mrs. Sheffey for the accommodation of the school at The Kalorama. They heard and approved Mr. McElroy's recommendation that "a single desk be provided for each pupil" as conducive not only to study and good discipline, but also to health. "Under the old system of crowding pupils," declared the gentleman, "the symmetry, beauty, health & life of thousands of young ladies have been destroyed, or, so impaired, that they have throughout life enjoyed but little comfort."

Mr. McElroy recommended further "that the school rooms be in Summer matted & in winter carpeted. By this arrangement the dust so oppressive in female school rooms [Because of floor-length dresses?] would be avoided, habits of neatness and elegance induced upon the pupils, and order and elevation of character promoted as well as personal comfort. The school room for young ladies should be a place for refining the taste and giving elegance to the character. . . ."

But Mr. McElroy did not depend entirely upon elegant surroundings to educate his young ladies. He requested, also, "a pair of Globes, large maps of the world of each hemisphere and of the U. S., a black board at which to lecture, a small cabinet of minerals, an electrical machine, an air pump, hydrostatic bellows and a small chemical apparatus."

The carpeting, the matting, the instructional equipment, and fifty desks at \$2.25 each, Mr. McElroy proposed to purchase for the sum total of \$387.50. He was authorized to do so.

The arrangement with Mrs. Sheffey did not prove a happy one, and after V. F. I. had been in operation only one year, Mrs. Sheffey declined all further connection with it. Soon afterwards the Trustees' arrangements for moving from The Kalorama had progressed as far as adoption of a building plan and contracting with the architect, Mr. Edwin Taylor, for the erection of what is now Stuart Hall's handsome Old Main for \$8,500. In the late spring of 1846 the cornerstone was laid with a clergyman as speaker, with a procession including the Masonic Fraternity and

the Sons of Temperance, and with "suitable deposits for the cornerstone." The building was ready for occupancy before the end of December, 1846.

During its very early years, The Virginia Female Institute had a rapid succession of principals. The Rev. Mr. McElroy served one year as co-principal with Mrs. Sheffey and two years as sole principal. He was succeeded by D. D. Minor, who served only one year before submitting his resignation. It was then that the trustees invited the Rev. Richard H. Phillips of Frederick, Maryland, "to take charge of the Va. Fem. Ins. and to occupy it as long as he pleases. . . ." Fortunately for the young school, it pleased Mr. Phillips to dedicate his very considerable abilities to V. F. I. for the rest of his active ministry—thirty-two years.

A church school from its beginnings, Stuart Hall finds much of its early history recorded in the annual Journals of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia. As early as 1846, Mr. McElroy reported 50 students. In the Journal for 1850, The Rev. T. T. Castleman, Rector of Trinity Church, reported: "For more than three years I had devoted much time and energy to the erection of a Seminary of learning in Staunton under the name of Virginia Female Institute. I now report this Institute completed, and in successful operation under the Rev. R. H. Phillips." For the same year Mr. Phillips himself reported about 80 pupils (boarding and day); for the following year 91 pupils, 7 teachers (5 men and 2 women) and a new vice-principal, the Rev. J. C. Wheat. By 1856 the reported enrollment had reached 118.

Even so, the school was experiencing financial embarrassment, and it called on the Convention of the Diocese of Virginia to take the school over with its assets and liabilities.

Although some of the details of the transfer were not effected till later, the Diocese of Virginia in 1856 paid \$7,000 to become the controlling stockholder in the corporation. V. F. I.'s release from debt as a result of this arrangement and of the generosity of members of Trinity Church enabled it to make improvements both in equipment and in efficiency of operation.

Hardly had the debts been paid before, in April, 1857, the Trustees arranged with Mr. Phillips for the erection across the north end of the original building of a new building, measuring 55'x31' and having three stories plus an unfinished basement. They specified that it was not to cost the corporation more than \$4,500, a sum which Mr. Phillips personally advanced. The final cost was over \$5,000, but Mr. Phillips submitted no claim for re-

payment of the excess over the agreement. The new North Building, the one now containing the dormitory halls known as Fleet and High Holborn, was completed in 1857. Connected with the original building by covered ways on all levels, it contained (according to the next school catalogue) "a commodious Study Hall, Recitation and Music Rooms, Play Room, and twelve comfortable dormitories. Bowling Alleys and other methods of exercise are provided." The so-called dormitories" were large rooms each designed to accommodate four girls in two double beds.

In antebellum V. F. I. the dormitories accommodated a total of sixty boarding pupils, and life within the Institute was described as that of a Christian family with the principal exercising discipline "parental, firm, prompt and uniform."

An entry in the 1853 diary of a V. F. I. student records the success of one instance of Mr. Phillips' parental discipline. Sarah Cordelia Wright wrote: ". . . Just as I begun to practice, Mary Caperton came in and told me that Mrs. P. had said that someone wanted to see me in the Study. Accordingly I went down expecting to see a visitor but as soon as I entered the truth flashed across my mind directly. I was frightened at first, but resolved not to show it. I feared not for myself so much as for Ellen, but I knew that I had been the means of getting her into trouble when I could have prevented it: but it was *all* done thoughtlessly, not thinking for one minute of the consequences, but I have pledged my word not to do the like again & oh God will Thou enable me to keep it. I have always loved Mr. P. since I have been under his care *but now & forever more* I will love him like a father. Oh! how kind he was to me, he did not schold, but only told me how wrong I had done, and talked to me as kindly as if he had been my father. I will never forget him *no never*, and I will make all at home love him two."

Is the young diarist's next sentence, added with no break at all, an indication of the occasion for the discipline, or does it record a subsequent event of the same day? "We all and E and M staid up until one and had fine time."

The rewards of the period were medals, which were presented in surprising numbers, and the punishments were "marks." One pupil wrote, "I could be quite happy at the Institute if there weren't any marks." Another's obsessive protests indicate her preoccupation with medals. "I declare it makes me quite angry to see some of the girls maneuvering for medals and making so much fuss over the teachers for medals & to avoid getting marks. I des-

pise all such motives and am happy to say am above them. . . . There are only two anyway that there is the least possible chance of my obtaining. . . ."

V. F. I. offered two programs of study in the 1850s, the Preparatory and the Collegiate. The full Collegiate course led to the award of the diploma, whereas a more limited course was rewarded by a certificate of proficiency. The program for the senior class in the Collegiate Department included Science of Things Familiar, Kame's Elements of Criticism, Evidences of Christianity, Intellectual Philosophy, Principles of Taste, English Composition, Theoretical and Analytical Botany, Moral Philosophy, Butler's Analogy, Boyd's Milton, Bookkeeping and Forms of Business. "In the study of this course," states the catalogue of 1859, "the great aim is to teach the pupil to think, to acquire the control of her attention and the discipline of her mind, and to evolve and expand its powers. Much use is made of analysis to enable the pupil to acquire a practical knowledge of principles and illustrative facts, that she may give, in her own language, at recitation, a connected outline of the subject." Candidates for a diploma were required to study "*Latin or one of the Modern Languages, and Music on One Instrument.*"

A pupil who was not a candidate for the diploma could devote her entire time to music, in which the Institute believed itself to offer superior advantages. In 1859 its music rooms were furnished with twelve pianos, and in 1867 new ones were added. Lessons were offered in piano, organ, guitar, harp, and vocal music. Groups of music pupils performed at the weekly soirees, and at least one diarist on the occasion of a soiree recorded her thankfulness that she was not a music pupil.

The daily and weekly schedule was set up with a view not only to academic and artistic studies and other accomplishments of a young lady but to Christian living and learning. At daily morning worship the pupils repeated "a precept and promise, previously selected from the Bible," and at evening prayers they recited a verse from the Bible. After evening prayers came two hours of study followed by a half-hour "appropriated to social intercourse," then the silence bell, and at ten o'clock the light bell. Boarding students studied in their rooms, and one pupil of that era recorded in later years, "We used to burn candles although I cannot now understand how two candles could have lighted a

room as they would not do so now. We were allowed two candles a week.”*

At V. F. I., as throughout the South, the prosperity of the '50s vanished during the war years. The school had to close, for on July 21, 1861, the State of Virginia took over its buildings and grounds for the use of what was then called the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind, whose plant was needed for a Confederate military hospital. The V. F. I. Trustees' protested to the Legislature: "By the impressment of the Virginia Female Institute . . ., our Church was deprived of the then only remaining means of aiding in the education of her children and in those of her friends,** and a seminary at which some 120 young ladies had been annually receiving instruction, was closed at a period when the necessities of the War required that few of our young men should receive the advantages of education, and when thereby female education had become doubly important."

Apparently, female education held more interest for its proponents in Staunton than for the lawmakers in Richmond, for the protest failed of its purpose.

In this connection I am reminded of the attractive and durable tradition that when the cadets of V. M. I. passed through Staunton on their way to the Battle of New Market they marched by the Virginia Female Institute and were cheered by the young ladies. Had circumstances been different, even footsore cadets might well have gone out of their way to march by, and the young ladies would most certainly have cheered; but the record disappointingly insists that the young ladies were not here. The buildings and grounds of V. F. I. remained under impressment until the end of the war.

After Appomattox the Trustees and the principal set about making repairs and arrangements to reopen the Institute in the

*Ella Kinney Ware, *Reminiscences of Ella Kinney Ware*, selected and compiled by Dorothy Hall (New York: The Comet Press, Inc., copyright 1967), p. 21.

The writer was the daughter of John Fitch Kinney, who had been appointed Chief Justice of Utah in 1854. Elsewhere she tells the story of her father's quandary as to the proper form for inviting Brigham Young and his many wives to an official ball. He finally decided to address the invitation "Mr. Brigham Young and Ladies." Mr. Young attended the ball with three of his wives.

**The buildings and grounds of the Episcopal High School had already been impressed.



Miss Martha Dabney Jones, Headmistress of Stuart Hall,
with portrait of Mrs. J. E. B. Stuart, Principal 1880-1899.

fall. A distinguished group of gentlemen, headed by General Robert E. Lee, accepted appointment as a Board of Visitors with the duty of having the Institute receive monthly visits of inspection. A further connection of General Lee with the school is evidenced by a published testimonial from him and from Generals Francis H. Smith, and William N. Pendleton: "The undersigned have had daughters educated at the Virginia Female Institute in Staunton, Va., under the care of Rev. R. H. Phillips. They therefore know it to be an admirably conducted and superior Institution for Young Ladies, and they cordially recommend it to favor even beyond its past extensive patronage."

At this point a personal experience of mine nearly a century after the period of which I am speaking is apropos. One summer afternoon as I was working in my office, an old gentleman appeared at the door.

"Is this the school that used to be the Virginia Female Institute?" he asked.

"Yes, it is," I replied.

"Then this is the school to which my mother came all the way from Texas right after the War Between the States," he said.

"All the way from Texas!" I exclaimed. "How did she happen to come so far when money was so scarce?"

"Well," he explained, "her father took her first to another school in which he had registered her, but when he arrived there, he was not pleased. So he wrote to General Lee and asked him where he should send his daughter to school. General Lee replied, 'Send her to the Virginia Female Institute in Staunton, Virginia.' And so he did."

Fees had to be kept low during the Reconstruction period. The catalogue for 1868-69 carries the following statement: "Although the prices of supplies are eighty per cent more than they were in 1861, it will be seen our terms are, upon the average, about the same as in that year." The annual charge for board, room, fuel, light, and tuition in English and natural sciences was \$250. Charges for music, art, and foreign languages were additional.

Further signs of the times appear elsewhere in the catalogues of the late '60s. While V. F. I. was still planning its course of study "with reference to the sphere of woman in life," the 1868-69 catalogue states: "Regarding the University of Virginia as a model for Institutions of the South, it will be perceived that our course of study and plan of instruction are arranged in pursuance

of this idea, as far as is suitable for an Institution for young ladies. . . . The altered condition of affairs in the South suggests the obvious necessity of a course of study to *thoroughly qualify our daughters for the profession of teaching*. It is our purpose to make this a specialty, and use our ample opportunities to secure for our graduates, *free of charge, suitable and profitable situations*."

The study of music, however, was not allowed to suffer. By 1870 the Trustees were planning the erection of an additional building specifically for music because of "the annoyances occasioned by the constant use of 12-15 pianos scattered thro' every part of the building during some 10 or 12 hours each day" as well as "the large amount of accommodation which is thus absorbed."

After the completion of that building, still known as Music Hall, a diocesan committee reported to the Council of the Diocese: "The condition of the school is very prosperous. It has re-attained its position in the front rank of Southern Female Schools. . . , points with pride to its past connexion with its Alumni [sic], now adorning the walks of society, and carrying the influence of the Church to every Southern state, and looks with satisfaction upon its class of 1872-3, composed of upwards of 90 of the fairest young women of the South under guidance and instruction of its accomplished corps of Professors and Teachers—and gazes with established hopes upon a no less successful career in the future."

At V. F. I. in the 1870s the intellectual discipline under which the fairest young women of the South were prepared to adorn the walks of society was one of high standards, and the rewards were no longer, literally speaking, golden. Mr. Phillips was advised by the Board of Directors ". . . That no diplomas or certificates of scholarship should be given by the Institute upon the basis of certificates of examination from other institutions, however respectable; but that all such evidences of proficiency should be founded on rigid examinations by the officers of the Institute themselves; and that . . . the expense incurred in connexion with the bestowal of diplomas and honors, should be lessened." One diploma should be awarded at a student's graduation, and inexpensive certificates of proficiency for distinctions prior to graduation. The day of many medals was over.

Physically, V. F. I. was expanding and improving. In the 1870s it went into debt to purchase an adjoining lot, thereby extending its frontage on Fillmore Street, and to install steam heat in its main buildings.

In January, 1880, a situation more serious than debt faced

the Trustees when they received the resignation of the Rev. Mr. Phillips for reasons of declining health. In regretfully accepting it, the Directors recorded "their gratitude to God for the happy influence he has exerted upon his pupils and over the great religious life of the South. Wheresoever they have gone his pupils have carried with them the power of healthful, beneficent and religious influences, conferring untold blessings on the people and Church in this and other Dioceses."

And we today as we look back over the School's 125 years can find no administration of deeper commitment or greater accomplishment.

Soon after Mr. Phillips' resignation, a committee recommended to the Board of Directors "the name and merits of Mrs. Flora Stuart, the widow of Gen. J. E. B. Stuart, as a lady eminently fitted to fill the office of Principal of the Virginia Female Institute." In none of the official records of the school is there any reference to Mrs. Stuart's formal education. She is recorded, rather, as "a lady of rare attainments and peculiar qualifications for the position she is to fill. With all the gentle qualities of a woman, who will care for the young girls under her charge as a mother, she is endowed with a clearness of judgment, a firmness of will and purpose, and a skill in administration which eminently fit her for the office she is to fulfill and for the efficient discharge of its high duties." In those days when an independent school could really be independent, there was no mention of semester hours or degrees or certification. There was mention of ability, and that Mrs. Stuart had in full measure.

At the end of her first session, Mrs. Stuart reported to the Trustees a school strong in its faculty and educational program but weak in enrollment and finances, weaknesses which she forthrightly laid at the door of the Church: "This lack is due directly to the want of a fair and proper support of this Diocesan School, in its boarding department by this Diocese to which it belongs—and to the marked want of support to its Day-School, by the Church in and around Staunton. . . . For my own part I intend to do in the future, as in the past, my whole duty to those who may be entrusted to me, be they few or many."

Financial strain continued, and money had to be borrowed and interest paid. Nevertheless by February, 1888, Mrs. Stuart was able to report: "Since September 1833 twenty-five (25) Scholarships have been granted to those who were boarders—and nine to day pupils—all of these ranging in time to individual

pupils, from one to five years—four covering the last named period. I write this to show that my aim has been to do a good work for those who need such help—and if I remain in charge the same course will be pursued. It is my purpose to have two pupils each year *free of all charge*: these to be admitted at my discretion, from the families of Clergymen, who have no advantages of education for their daughters, provided always, that the pupils so admitted, shall show their appreciation of these advantages." (Actually, scholarships had been given to clergymen's daughters since the school's earliest days, though not in comparable numbers.)

Mrs. Stuart kept her fees as low as was consonant with the quality of school she was determined to run. Her general charge in 1898 was still \$250 a session, as it had been in 1881. Originally it had covered board, washing, fuel, gas, seat in church, calisthenics, and tuition in the English branches and Latin. At the end of her administration the general charge no longer covered the seat in church or tuition in Latin, but class instruction in elocution and freehand drawing had been thrown in. Also, by this time there were differentiated charges for instruction in piano. Instruction from a "professor" was \$60 a session, from a "lady" it was \$50.

Among her pupils, Mrs. Stuart had the reputation of being a kind but austere lady. She required a black uniform—not silk—for winter and white dresses or uniforms for spring for all formal occasions and for off-campus wear. Mr. Phillips had permitted colored ribbons with the required black alpaca suit, and blue sashes with the white dresses, but Mrs. Stuart banned all color with the uniforms. The catalogues of her day indicate that few matters within the School were beneath her attention. She deemed it inadvisable, for any pupil to write more than four (later three) letters a week, one of which was to go to her home; and she ruled: "No letters can be received or mailed without passing through the hands of the Principal." Throughout Mr. Phillips' administration, V. F. I. catalogues had carried this ruling: "Novels and promiscuous newspapers and pamphlets will not be received into the Institute from any quarter." Mrs. Stuart's ruling was more inclusive: "No light literature is allowed among the pupils." Shakespeare was studied, but in an expurgated edition. The censored reading, the black uniforms for public occasions, and many of the other regulations of the past century would today be considered intolerable; but one policy recorded in the catalogues of

Mrs. Stuart's day would be welcomed by the students of this 125th anniversary year: 'Servants are in attendance for such sweeping and other work as the pupils are not permitted to do.'

Mrs. Stuart's administration saw the enrollment advance from 25 (for it had declined in the '70s) to 99; the plant improved by the erection of the wing in which you are now seated and which was designated Stuart Hall before the school was so named, and of the stone retaining wall and iron fence on Frederick Street. It also saw in the 1880-81 session the founding by her daughter Virginia Pelham Stuart, of E.L.A., doubtless one of the oldest high school honor societies in the country, and through E.L.A. the beginning of the V. F. I. library.*

In 1899 Mrs. Stuart submitted her resignation because of her sense of duty to her grandchildren. The Trustees were finally constrained to accept it with deep regret and "to express their high appreciation of the devoted fidelity and ability" of her nineteen-year administration.

Miss Maria Pendleton Duval, who had been serving as vice principal of V. F. I. under her cousin Mrs. Stuart, was then elected principal.

A vigorous and forward-looking administrator, Miss Duval was constantly planning and as constantly pushing for the realization of her plans. In 1903 she recommended a kindergarten as a day student feeder for the school. That same year and again in 1904 she emphasized the need for a gymnasium, an additional room for the intermediate school, a laundry, a larger dining room, an infirmary, and some additional sleeping quarters. To the Trustees she declared—and this statement at that period is surprising: "Perhaps the question most frequently asked by persons desiring to select a school is 'What sort of gymnasium have you?'"

When Miss Duval offered to give \$500 and to advance \$1,000 toward the construction of a building to connect Music Hall with the North Building, she was authorized to proceed provided the new building cost the Institute no more than \$2500. Anything beyond that would be her personal responsibility. It was under these circumstances that Faith Hall, so named because it was built on faith, was constructed. Before it was completed, Miss Duval personally had put \$2,053 into it. Also, she gave the stone retaining wall on Fillmore Street, which cost her \$950.

*The school library today is still the special service area of E.L.A.

Not for some years, however, did Miss Duval, after persuading the Trustees to borrow \$15,000, have the building that she really desired. Opened in 1909, Whittle Hall provided the school with an infirmary on the top floor, with two dormitory floors, with a dining room, and (where the swimming pool now is) with a gymnasium. "Especially has the gymnasium," Miss Duval reported to the Trustees, "been a blessing, and the awakened interest in athletics and classes has taken the place of the sorority spirit heretofore in the house. At no other time could the abandoning of these secret societies have been so easily accomplished."

It was Miss Duval's idea that one floor of Whittle Hall should be called Bishop's Way and the rooms named for bishops, and that another floor should be called Old Virginia and its rooms named for such plantations as Westover, Upper and Lower Brandon, Shirley, Tuckahoe—names which still add their unique charm to portions of Whittle Hall.

The new dining room in Whittle Hall enabled Miss Duval to turn over the old dining room (now the school library, located under the room in which you are sitting) to the primary department. Probably some of you here tonight began your schooling in that room.

Perhaps, also, you continued at V. F. I. through the impressive program of academic and musical studies listed in the catalogues of Miss Duval's day. You may even have been one of the relatively few to whom the following statement was addressed: "Preparation for college will be given if there is a demand for it."

That quotation is taken from the V. F. I. catalogue for 1906-07, the last one issued under the name of The Virginia Female Institute. The same catalogue was the last to list the charges for boarding pupils under such headings as "Board, Steam Heat, Light, Furnished Room and Servants' attendance" (\$280); "English Tuition, including Freehand Drawing, Chorus, Class Elocution, History of Music and Theory" (\$60); "Use of Library" (\$5). For the last time ancient and modern languages and gymnastics were listed along with music under "Special Studies" with special fees. In 1908 we find an inclusive charge of \$440 for "board, tuition in all branches, pew rent, and all fees."

A more historic advance noted in the 1907-08 catalogue was the action of the Board of Trustees in 1907: "That in grateful memory of the services of Mrs. J. E. B. Stuart, so long the honored and beloved principal of this institution, the name of the corporation, and the school which it conducts, shall be changed from the VIRGINIA FEMALE INSTITUTE to STUART HALL (INCORPORATED)."

The change has been recorded less formally but more feelingly by a pupil* of that period who recently reminisced: "I remember the joy when Mr. Jett announced in study hall that we would not be V. F. I. any longer, but Stuart Hall. Cheers went up, for the boys on the hill had been saying, 'There go the females!'"

By the close of Miss Duval's administration in 1915, the academic organization of Stuart Hall had changed with the times. The program of the four-year Academic School now took for granted the completing of college entrance requirements. The full diploma of the school was awarded, however, only upon completion of two additional years of what was called the Upper School. Stuart Hall graduates of 1915, Miss Duval's last year, entered without condition Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Smith, Wellesley, Vassar, and Barnard. At the time of her resignation, the Trustees paid tribute to Miss Duval's initiative and enthusiasm, her progressive spirit, her persistent efforts on behalf of Stuart Hall, and the improvements in grounds and buildings and in standards of scholarship that she had been able to effect.

They declined, however, to meet her price of \$6400 for her furniture and pianos, deciding instead to buy new furniture and pianos for Stuart Hall.

Practically throughout its history until the resignation of Miss Duval, the school had been operated under what seems today a strange arrangement. The Trustees leased the property to the elected principal at annual rentals ranging from \$1,000 in the early years to \$3500 toward the end of Miss Duval's administration. The principal was then responsible for furnishing the school, for keeping the buildings and grounds in good condition, for engaging and paying personnel, for making charges and for granting scholarships—in fact, for the costs of running the school. For current expenses, principals had to rely almost entirely on fees. Then, as now, they were wont to stress the need, and bewail the scarcity, of financial support on the part of the owning dioceses. Such occasional contributions as there were (and some were generous) resulted mainly from personal canvassing by clergymen appointed from time to time as agents of the Board of Trustees. Under the lease arrangement, the principal often advanced personal funds for the school. Some such advances became gifts; others the corporation repaid by canceling rents for a given period.

*Mary Lillian Coiner Houff, of Staunton.

After Miss Duval's resignation, the lease arrangement was discontinued, and the principal became a salaried employee.

The financial difficulties experienced toward the end of Miss Duval's administration continued into that of her successor, Miss Jane Colston Howard. A graduate of Bryn Mawr, Miss Howard had shown herself a capable teacher in the school. With some reluctance she accepted the position of principal, in which she served for three years. The problems which she had inherited failed to improve. There was some drop in enrollment, and deficits increased.

When Miss Howard resigned in 1918, the Trustees were fortunate in securing as principal a lady who became one of the outstanding personages of the history of Stuart Hall—Mrs. Ada A. Hills. When elected, she was serving as head of the Academic Department of Sweet Briar College.

Mrs. Hills embarked upon her new duties with the vigor and the administrative skill that were to characterize the first decade of her administration. Although the enrollment for the preceding year had been at a very low level, she reported for her first session 97 boarding pupils from 22 states, and 65 day students. To accommodate them all she had had to furnish storage rooms as bedrooms, use some infirmary rooms, and put two teachers in Esseton, the Fillmore Street residence which stood approximately where the telephone building now is. Reporting on the health of her charges in 1918-19, her first session, Mrs. Hills told the Trustees that 45 students had had influenza at once, and 4 had had typhoid fever, one fatally. Otherwise, declared the undaunted lady, "the health of the girls has been uniformly excellent."

Mrs. Hills built a scholarly faculty. Herself a Wellesley graduate, she attracted teachers from the well known eastern women's colleges and encouraged Stuart Hall graduates to attend those colleges.

During her administration Stuart Hall purchased the two adjoining properties on Frederick Street. The building now known as Robertson House was purchased from C. S. Baker and promptly considerably enlarged, primarily for dormitory use. The house now known as Cochran was purchased from Dr. Thomas W. Parkins in 1924 and remodeled, the main floor for the primary school and the Domestic Art department, the second floor for teachers' rooms.

Mrs. Hills' administration saw, also, the construction of the

Academic Building and the unit connecting it with Whittle Hall—a tremendous improvement in the school's plant.

But in spite of her outstanding achievements, the final years of Mrs. Hills' administration were beset by difficulties. Her age was quite advanced for the position she was holding, and she no longer had the firm disciplinary control of her earlier years. Also, the Great Depression had reduced enrollment and income. The indomitable spirit that characterized Mrs. Hills until her death at the age of 103 shows in her letter of resignation in 1933. She would have resigned unconditionally the preceding fall, she declared but for "the fear that it would be a cowardly act to leave the school at an especially difficult time."

Mrs. Hills had begun her administration when the Trustees had been "seriously apprehensive for the future of the school because of its greatly depleted condition. The years in which you have presided over its destinies," they wrote her, "it has grown steadily in influence, in the high grade of academic instruction, and in that indefinable thing which we call the spirit of the school. Your work has been eminently successful throughout, and the difficulties now confronting the school are in no sense of your making. These are days of heavy financial stress and for you personally we rejoice that the burden is no longer upon you."

The burden was transferred to Miss Ophelia S. T. Carr (spoken of by the girls as Miss Ophelia Street Car), who had spent her undergraduate years at the University of Kentucky and had done graduate work at the University of Chicago. When she became principal of Stuart Hall in September, 1933, the boarding enrollment was down to 57, the day student enrollment in high school was 24 and in the intermediate department 11. The primary department had been closed because it had operated at a loss the preceding year. Miss Carr promptly closed Robertson and Cochran Houses and moved the intermediate department to the main building. She discontinued requiring uniforms, as an unnecessary expense to families.

Although day student enrollment remained small, boarding enrollment rose rapidly. Another development under Miss Carr was increased emphasis on college for all Stuart Hall girls. In September, 1939, the principal reported that *all* of that year's graduates were in college or in some advanced school.

Under Miss Carr alumnae work began to assume some importance, and alumnae chapters were organized in New York, Boston, central Kentucky, and Roanoke in addition to Staunton.

When Miss Carr resigned in 1943, her resignation was accepted with regret and with appreciation for her accomplishments on behalf of Stuart Hall.

The new principal took up her duties as the school entered its 100th year, 1943-44. Mrs. William T. Hodges, who had won her bachelors' degree in the first graduating class of Sweet Briar College and her master's from Columbia University, brought to Stuart Hall the administrative skills of long experience in heading Virginia preparatory schools.

Her twelve-year administration here was marked by improvements in the physical plant (especially arrangements for recreation rooms and for adequate space for the library), by the school's increased reputation with leading colleges, by the paying off of a debt of \$115,000, and by marked progress in alumnae work. Also, Mrs. Hodges discontinued the Lower School and made Stuart Hall the four-year secondary school that it is today.

Since Mrs. Hodges' retirement in 1955, I have had the happy privilege of presiding over Stuart Hall. Accelerating changes in our national life during that time have been reflected by developments in the school—new freedoms and responsibilities for the students, an increasingly demanding curriculum and the addition of advanced placement courses, the launching and incorporation of the Stuart Hall Foundation, deletion from the Stuart Hall charter of all reference to race. The buildings have been considerably remodeled, and the campus extended by the purchase of the properties known as Gibbs House and the Rose Harrison Worthington House.

Throughout the rapid changes of recent years and the more measured ones of much of its history, this school has held to its enduring values, the most important of which is its Christian orientation. Founded under church auspices and considered a diocesan school as early as 1856, it later became bi- and tri-diocesan as the mother Diocese of Virginia shared responsibility for the school with her daughter and her granddaughter, the Dioceses of Southern Virginia and Southwestern Virginia respectively. Trustees representing these dioceses have shaped the policies of the school; and a succession of rectors, chaplains, and administrators have carried them out, always assisted by devoted teachers. I would like to mention by name many of those teachers, but time does not permit. Finally, generations of students have been contributors to, not just receptacles of, Stuart Hall's enduring values.

In its earliest years the Rev. Mr. Phillips and his vice principal, the Rev. Mr. Wheat, found in this school the major field for their ministries. With the founding of Emmanuel Church in 1893 and the school's transfer of its affiliation from Trinity to the new parish came the beginning of its long and fruitful association with the Rev. Robert Carter Jett, later first bishop of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. As rector of Emmanuel, as chaplain of Stuart Hall, as president of its Board of Trustees, as a specially appointed executive officer for the school, and as its indefatigable and persuasive friend, Bishop Jett not only exerted a profound influence on students and teachers but insured the very survival of the school through its most critical years. Finally, I must mention the contribution of the Rev. J. Lewis Gibbs, whose thirty-nine-year service as trustee, chaplain, and teacher of religion lasted into my own administration. Dr. Gibbs' devotion to Stuart Hall was deep, and his influence on the lives of many of its students was equally so.

As we review the past in this 125th year of Stuart Hall, we are faced by striking contrasts with the present. When the school began, students arrived by stage coach; now they arrive by air from all quarters of the globe. In the early years they were not permitted to read "novels and promiscuous literature"; today the reading of *Moll Flanders* is a routine requirement of the twelfth-grade English course. In the early years the winning of medals, relatively few of which were given for scholarship, occupied much of the attention of students; today winning the opportunity to continue their education in college is a major goal. In the early years students memorized Bible verses and recited them daily, and in their journals recorded the contents of sermons; today they study comparative religion and analyze what both Christianity and modern motion pictures have to say to questioning youth in a complex society.

Today as Stuart Hall faces its demanding present and its challenging future, it draws strength from the richness of its 125-year past and from its motto—"Omnia cum Deo."

Extract from Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Female Institute, at Staunton, Va., April 4th. 1899, following the report of a Committee appointed to confer with Mrs. Stuart and express the desire of the Board that she would reconsider her determination to retire from the management of the Institute:—

"Thereupon, on motion of Mr. Anderson, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

The Board have received with deep regret the resignation of Mrs. Stuart, and desire to express their high appreciation of the devoted fidelity, and ability with which she has directed the affairs of the Institute during the nineteen years of her incumbency of this responsible office. Our heartfelt prayer to God is that her life may be spared for many years of usefulness, and be crowned with His richest blessings. And thereupon, it was —

RESOLVED that the Board accept the resignation of Mrs. Stuart."

a copy from the minutes -
 Tho. D. Ransom
 Secretary

A GIRL'S SCHOOL HERE NEARLY 100 YEARS AGO

J. A. WADDELL GIVES INTERESTING ACCOUNT OF SAME
FROM A MANUSCRIPT OF THOMAS JEFFERSON

From manuscripts in the hand writing of Thomas Jefferson, filed in one of the Departments in Washington, is learned of a school for Girls known as the Staunton Female Academy, which was conducted in Staunton nearly one hundred years ago by Henry Leuba, generally supposed to be a Frenchman, but in reality a native of Neuchatel, Switzerland.

The existence of such a school is probably known to a very few—but many of Leuba's pupils are remembered by J. Addison Waddell, who gives the following account.

On July 24, 1824, about the time the University of Virginia was about to be opened, Mr. Leuba wrote to Thomas Jefferson offering the services of himself and his son Henry, a youth of 20, as teachers of French and Italian. In this letter he also says that his hatred of tyranny and love of civil and religious liberty induced him to come to the land of Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe and Franklin. That he had resided for three years in Fredericksburg before coming to Staunton and at that writing had been living in Staunton for ten months. How long he remained here and where he went afterwards is not known.

That Mr. Leuba placed a low estimate on the course of studies at the University is evidenced from the following; "We could moreover teach Geography, writing and arithmetic, if these branches of education correspond to the plans proposed for the said institution." The letter concludes as follows; "If you condescend sir, to have us received as professors to said University I wish you to believe that we will justify, not only the reports which the inhabitants of Staunton will make concerning us, but that moreover we will render ourselves worthy of your esteem and the continuance of your good will."

Newspaper clipping, inclosed in the letter, gave information about the school and the estimation in which it was held by the citizens of Staunton.

First there is a report of a number of gentlemen who attended the examinations held from July 21-24, 1823. They gave a glow-

(Clipping from an old Staunton newspaper—date unknown—copied by the late Miss Gay Trout in 1931.)

ing account of what they saw and heard. Miss Lewis, the teacher in charge of the English department was especially commended. The report was signed by Judge Archibald, Mayor Danial Sheffey, Rev. Danial Stephens, Capt. John C. Sowers, Gen'l. Briscoe G. Baldwin, Dr. William Boys and Dr. M. S. Coulter.

"Premiums" were distributed to a number of the pupils. Miss Margaret A. Sowers, (Mother of Miss Mary Julia Baldwin) received three. Others less distinguished were Miss Hannah Estelle (afterwards Mrs. Livingston Waddell), Miss Margaret L. Smith (Mrs. Robert S. Brooke and Miss Mary Sheffey (Mrs. Boyden). The first "premium" in Music and French was awarded to Miss Sheffey. "Premiums" were also awarded to five children: Mary Stribling, Fanny Baldwin (Mrs. A. H. H. Stuart), Frances Eskeridge, Ann Sheffey and Julia Sowers—the children at that time were about 8 years old.

In connection with the report of the examining committee, Mr. and Mrs. Leuba made their announcement of the next session to begin in September.

The charges for the session of 5 months were as follows:

| | |
|--|---------|
| For board, bed, bedding and fuel | \$50.00 |
| For washing | 6.00 |
| For tuition in higher English | 16.00 |
| For only spelling and Reading | 5.00 |
| For French, German and Italian, drawing and painting (3 lessons pr. Week) | 10.00 |
| For Vocal music and on the Piano-forte | 25.00 |
| For paper, quills and ink | 2.00 |

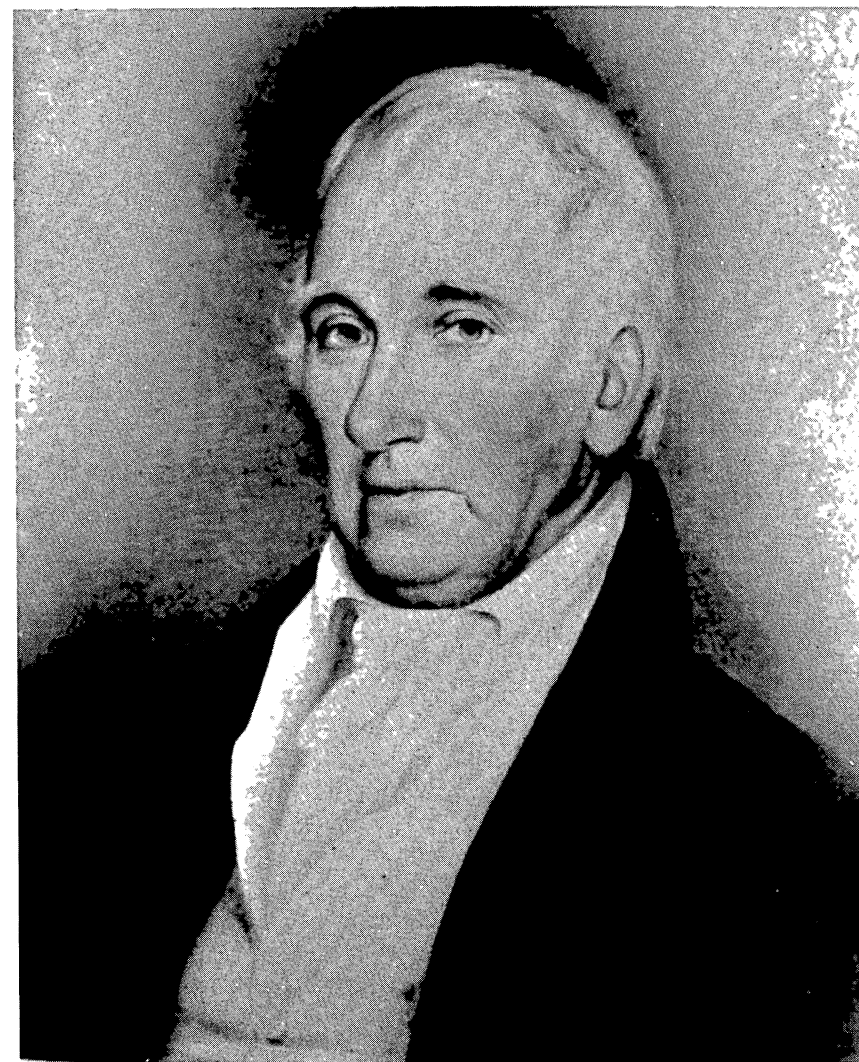
Each scholar will furnish a load of wood for the winter session only.

The next examination was held on January 30th, 1824 and was attended by parents of the pupils and a number of the people of Staunton and its vicinity. The examining committee consisted of Judge Stuart, Judge Brown, Gen. Baldwin, Dr. Waddell, Capt. Sowers, Dr. Coulter, Mr. Eskeridge and Dr. Stephens. In this report the teacher of English, Miss Lewis, is again highly commended. "She reads and pronounces the English language with propriety," said the committee. "The other branches are taught by Mr. and Mrs. Leuba and son of whose capacity there is no question. It is believed the French language no where in the state is better acquired than at this school; it is the native language of

the teachers who well understand its principle and have been in the habit of speaking it in the upper circles of Paris."

The care with which Mr. Jefferson filed the papers sent to him by Mr. Leuba are characteristic of him—however the Messers Leuba were not appointed professors at the University to teach geography, writing and arithmetic, as well as French and Italian.

At the present time it would seem curious to see a number of grave gentlemen, judges, doctors, lawyers and business men, attending for 4 consecutive days the examinations of a party of school girls—but—in Mr. Leuba's time, Staunton was a quiet village; there were no railroads, daily newspapers, theatres and not much business that required attention and the examinations of the school no doubt supplied agreeable recreation to the community generally.



Portrait of Captain Robert Porterfield.

THE BROTHERS PORTERFIELD

by Richard P. Bell, III

No doubt in these troubled times, it is considered too chauvinistic by certain elements of our society to think, talk, or write in favor of patriotism or pure love of country, but it is believed, by a vast number of people, it is essential to return to this way of thinking to preserve our country.

In the era of which we shall here write, particularly about two persons concerned, there was no such thing as mass anarchy. True, there was rebellion, but the rebelliousness represented a goal of freedom without anarchy, without mobs milling in the streets who have no purpose but to tear down and not rebuild. It's true that there was a great political disagreement during the Revolutionary War, but there was never any doubt among those leaders, who were at opposite extremes, that love of country came first regardless of whether the antagonists were "Hamiltonian" or "Jeffersonian" in philosophy. That was the first so-called "establishment" and if it were not for that, there would have been no medal of honor winners, no aims for peace through strength rather than sickly compromise.

We write about two brothers who apparently migrated early, in the times before the Revolutionary War, to the lower Shenandoah Valley. Charles and Robert Porterfield came to Frederick County Virginia from Pennsylvania. Their father, Charles Porterfield, Senior, from that state, was of English stock, but evidently the sons, at an early age, had a feeling of rebellion concerning the attitude of the mother country, England. Charles entered the Revolution as captain; the younger brother, Robert, was a second lieutenant.

It is not recorded when Charles was born, but Robert was born in 1752. Heitman shows Charles Porterfield as participating in the Canada Campaign and later "prisoner at Quebec 31st. December, 1775." He was "Captain 11th. Virginia Regiment, 3rd. February, 1777." Later he became "Lieutenant Colonel of a Virginia State Regiment," in command of which he was mortally wounded at the Battle of Camden, South Carolina, on August 16, 1780.¹

In the most critical years of the Revolution, Charles Porterfield had experienced the Jersey Campaign and the Battle of Brandywine, Delaware. In reference to Brandywine, John Mar-

shall, afterward Chief Justice, states, "Captain Porterfield and Waggoner engaged the British flank guard closely, killed a captain with ten or fifteen privates, drove them out of the wood, and were on the point of taking a field piece. The sharpness of the skirmish soon drew a large body of the British to that quarter, and the Americans were then driven over the Brandywine." And in a footnote, Marshall adds, "The author was an eyewitness to the skirmish."² This battle took place September 11, 1777.

The next available record shows the Porterfield brothers at Valley Forge after December 11, 1777, where they had encamped by order of General Washington. This was a temporary redoubt because the battles of the north central states had gone so badly for the Americans. In that encampment, John Marshall, Charles Porterfield, Robert Porterfield were messmates and shared a log hut together with Captain Philip Slaughter of Culpeper County. Slaughter writes, "We were without bedding of any sort; many not a single blanket, almost naked and many times half rations. We suffered more than I can describe."³

No wonder General Washington prayed often at Valley Forge. The following letter written by General S. H. Lewis of Augusta to the Reverend Mr. Dana of Alexandria brings out this fact, and quotes Robert Porterfield in his old age:

Lewiston, Dec. 14, 1855

Reverend and Dear Sir: When (some weeks ago) I had the pleasure of seeing you in Alexandria, and in our conversation, the subject of religious opinion and character of George Washington was spoken of. I repeated to you the substance of what I had heard from the late General Robert Porterfield, of Augusta, and which at your request, I promised to reduce to writing at some leisure moment and send you. I proceed to redeem the promise.

Some short time before the death of General Porterfield, I made him a visit and spent the night at his home. He related many very interesting facts that had occurred within his own observation in the War of the Revolution, particularly the Jersey Campaign and the encampment at Valley Forge.

He said that his official duty (being brigade inspector) frequently brought him in contact with General Washington. Upon one occasion (which he mentioned) induced him to dispense with the usual formality, and he went directly to Washington's apartment

where he found him on his knees, engaged in his morning's devotion. He said he mentioned the circumstances to (afterward) General (Alexander) Hamilton, who replied it was his constant habit. I had lately heard Mr. ——— say, on authority of Mr. ———, that General Washington was the subject of fits of passion and that he swore terribly. General Porterfield said the charge was false; that he had known General Washington personally for years and had frequently been in his presence under very exciting circumstances, and he had never heard him swear an oath, or in any way to profane the name of God. "Tell Mr. ——— from me", said he, "that he had much better be reading his Bible than repeating such slanders on the character of General Washington." "General Washington," said he, "was a pious man, and a member of your Church (Episcopal). I saw him myself, on his knees, receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in ——— Church, in Philadelphia." He specified the time and the place. My impression is that Christ Church was the place and Bishop White, as he afterward was, the minister. This is to the best of my recollection, an accurate statement of what I heard from General Porterfield on the subject.

I am sir, with great respect, very truly yours,

S. H. Lewis⁴

Major John Howard McCue, C. S. A. of Augusta County in an account, written in his own hand, describes the first meeting of Robert Porterfield with General Washington at Valley Forge, as told to him many years later:

"General Porterfield when I was quite a youth at his own house related to me Gen'l P. was detailed as the bearer of dispatches (at Valley Forge) upon a sudden emergency, to the Commander-in-Chief. As he approached the vicinity of headquarters, about break of day, he saw standing a horse, answering the description of the one the Gen'l then rode, and a man kneeling as if engaged in devotional exercise in the corner of a fence. He halted not many steps off, until summoned to approach, which he did, announcing his name in full, *Robert Porterfield*. Washington extended his hand to him and said, 'Robert I am glad to see you' or words to that effect. Gen'l P. remarked to me that when George Washington called his

name, Robert, it created a thrill of pleasure such as he had not before, or since, experienced. He further described his personal appearance."*

Having endured the hardships of the northern battles and Valley Forge encampment, the Porterfield brothers are known to be on the scene of the Battle of Camden, South Carolina, August 1780. John Marshall states, in referring to, the then, Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Porterfield in this battle: "This valuable officer was pressing forward to Charleston. Continuing his advance, he was within one day's march of Colonel Buford, when that officer was defeated. Colonel Porterfield still remained on the frontiers of the Carolinas and had the address not only to avoid the fate of every other corps sent to the relief of Charleston, but to subsist his men; and keep the semblance of holding that part of South Carolina.

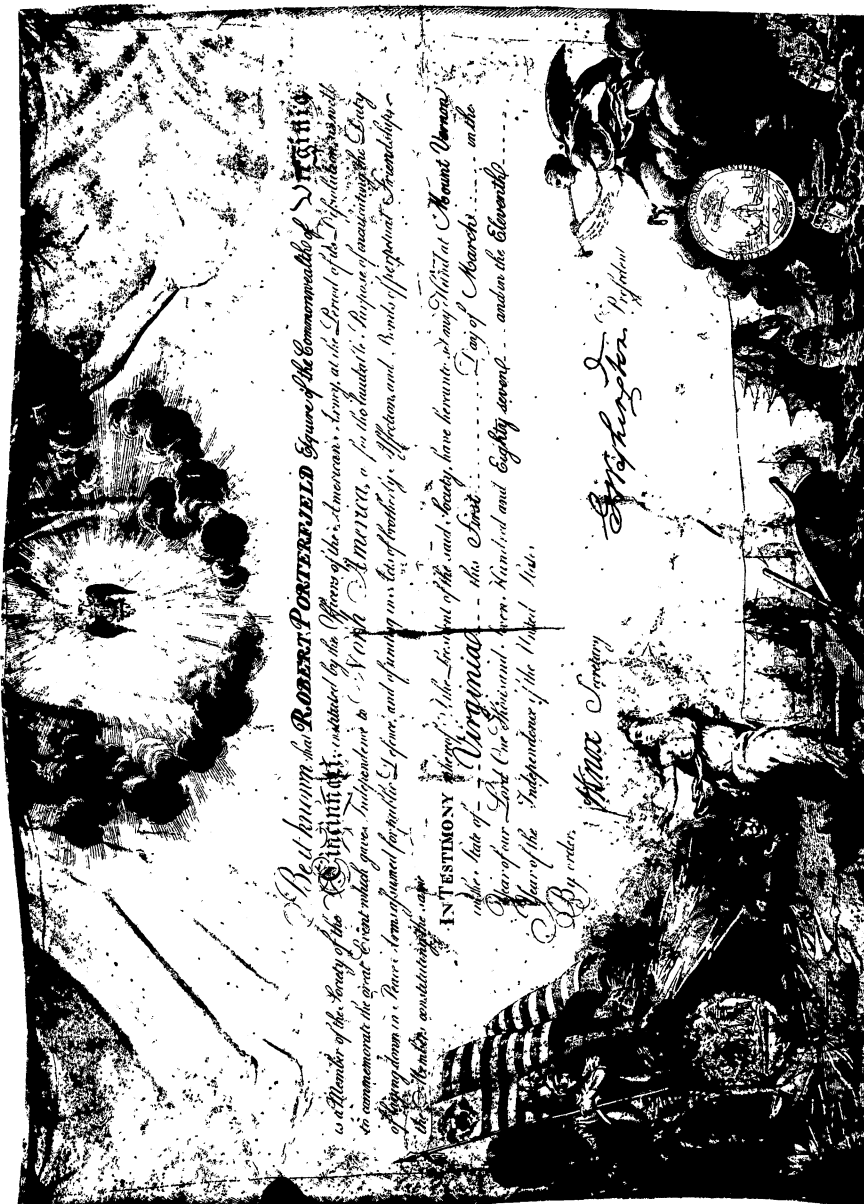
"The light infantry, particularly Porterfield's Corps, behaved so well as to check the advance of the British. Unfortunately, their gallant commander received a mortal wound which compelled him to leave his regiment. Yet, part of it kept its ground; and with the aid of the legion infantry, stopped the British van; upon order was restored to the American Army."²

Robert Porterfield, now Captain, was in the same campaign and was taken prisoner at Charleston while serving in the Virginia 7th. It seems that Charles Porterfield died slowly, having been wounded on August 16, 1780, and expired in October of that year. His brother, Robert, had been released by exchange and appealed to the governor to repay thirty guinea which Charles had borrowed from Lord Rawdon, the British commander, "as he flattered himself, his brother's services had merited it from the state." The money was not forthcoming, and although he wrote to Governor Nelson of Virginia, it was not recorded whether it was repayed or not.³

Heitman¹ states that Robert Porterfield served throughout the War of the Revolution, which ended in April 1783. (The war in the South, particularly Georgia, raged hard and long one and one half years after the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, Oct. 19, 1780.)

After the Revolution, Robert Porterfield became an original member of the Society of the Cincinnati, composed of about 300 American officers in the Continental (Regular) Line, and a num-

*Major McCue's notes courtesy Miss Elizabeth Perry, Staunton, Virginia.



General Porterfield's Certificate of Membership to the Society of the Cincinnati.

ber of French officers including Lafayette. He remained a member of the Virginia Society until it temporarily disbanded in 1824, with those remaining officers, or then, civilians. When the Virginia Society disbanded, it had about \$25,000.00 remaining in spite of donating to old officers and their families through the years. At one of the last meetings a vote was taken whether to give this sum to Washington College (now Washington and Lee) or Hampden-Sydney. The vote was 18 to 16 in favor of Washington College, Robert Porterfield recording his vote for Washington College.⁵

Returning from the Battles of the Revolution, Robert Porterfield maintained a residence on a large estate near Hermitage, Virginia, north of Waynesboro. This was known as "Soldiers Retreat" and the year of his settlement is recorded as 1784. But it was far from a "Retreat", at that time, for Revolutionary officers could not retire except for disability. He had been promoted through the various ranks and by 1808 was known as General Porterfield. He maintained an apparently required affiliation with the local militia and was a member of Captain Turk's company, in spite of his rank. The record shows he was "court-martialed and fined for failure to muster"³ regardless of his rank and previous active service in the regular army!

On September 17, 1808, a meeting of the citizens of Augusta County was held at Chamber's Tavern in Staunton to consider the state of the Country. "General Porterfield was called to the chair and an address and series of resolutions were adopted denouncing the Federal authorities on account of their relations with Great Britain." Thomas Jefferson was President at the time and John Tyler, Governor of Virginia.³

The state executive evidently tried to arrange a court-martial of General Porterfield. Mr. Coalter of Augusta declined the inquiry, stating that there were a number of people in the country with such opinions. "Yet if they are their honest opinions, ought they conceal them, or ought their patriotism and love of country be drawn in question on that ground?" Evidently the inquiry was dropped.³

Some years before, in 1792, Robert Porterfield had bitterly opposed the Excise Tax which had been advocated by the Federalist (Hamiltonian) Party. Therefore, we can assume that Porterfield was an advocate of the Republican (Jeffersonian) Party.⁶

In spite of the strong opinions regarding the governing bodies, he did not lose the confidence of the state. Governor Bar-

bour appointed him as one of the commissioners from the state for ascertaining and establishing the line reserved for Revolutionary War Soldiers of the Virginia Line, west of the Ohio River. While attending to this business he had the misfortune to fall from a horse and break a leg.³

In the "Republican Farmer", September 6, 1811, we find an advertisement by General Porterfield in regard to the training of officers and regimental musters of various regiments of his brigade.³

Porterfield was president of the Military Association in Staunton organized June 20, 1812. He was in his 62nd. year, but was chosen because he was "an old Revolutionary officer of skill and ability." He was commissioned Brigadier General, a title he had held in the militia since 1808. The troops were quartered on the eastern slopes of Betsy Bell, near Staunton, where they had "plenty of pure water and firewood and the land well adapted for military maneuvers." The companies marched to Camp Holly near Richmond and thence to Craney Island.³

In 1814 during the War of 1812, in which General Porterfield was an active participant, he was appointed by the Governor to explore the grounds where the enemy might attempt to land on the York and James Rivers and the country over which they would probably march on their route to Richmond. He performed this service.³

Following the close of these hostilities General Porterfield retired from military service to live at "Soldiers Retreat". It was reported that "real estate rose rapidly, especially in the town of Staunton and vicinity, and there was a rapid revival of prosperity in every portion of the county."¹³ From the strife of wars to peace and prosperity was an old soldiers dream coming true.

General Porterfield had married Rebecca Farrar, born 1764, daughter of Mary Magdalene Chastain and Peter Farrar of Amelia County. Rebecca's father was a first cousin of Thomas Jefferson, as Judith, his mother, was a sister of Peter Jefferson, Thomas' father. They had four children, Charles who died unmarried, Mary C. (or Polly) who married Lewis Wayland, John Porterfield who married Betsy McCue and Rebecca who married William Kinney. The daughter of Polly and Lewis Wayland married a nephew of William Kinney, Robert H. Kinney. In a genealogy written in 1903 Robert Porterfield's descendants lived in 15 states, the District of Columbia, Canada and England.⁷ No

Signature of General Robert Porterfield.

Robert THE LIFE *Porterfield*
 OF
GEORGE WASHINGTON,
 COMMANDER IN CHIEF
 OF THE
 AMERICAN FORCES,
 DURING THE WAR WHICH ESTABLISHED THE INDEPENDENCE
 OF HIS COUNTRY,



Stone marker in Thornrose Cemetery, Staunton, Virginia.

doubt there are descendants in all states and elsewhere at this time.

Robert Porterfield was a registered member of Tinkling Spring Church, as was probably the rest of his family. In the diary of the pastor of that Church, the Reverend B. M. Smith, January 15, 1842, it is written: "at General Porterfields at night. He is evidently failing fast."⁶ But the old General lived until February 13, 1843, the following year, when he died at the advanced age of 91 at his home, "Soldiers Retreat", where he was buried.

There are a few mementos and relics of Robert Porterfield extant. The family portraits of him, his daughter, Rebecca, and her husband, William Kinney, remain in Staunton. The original parchment of the Society of the Cincinnati, signed by George Washington, is in possession of a descendant in Carmi, Illinois.* Some table silver, a pistol, part of his library including a first edition of "The Life of Washington" by John Marshall are with a descendant in Falls Church, Virginia.** A small bit of his hair, along with that of two infant great granddaughters, enclosed in a gold pin, remain in Staunton.

In November of 1908 his descendants in Staunton decided to disinter his remains, along with his wife's, and place them alongside their daughter, Rebecca Kinney, in Thornrose Cemetery. The reason for this was apparently because the old place at "Soldiers Retreat" was destroyed, and there would probably be destruction of the private burying ground markers. Peculiarly, there is no marker over the grave of his wife, Rebecca, in Thornrose, but it is on the cemetery record⁸ of her reinterment there. We can assume that Robert Porterfield is the only Soldier of the Revolution buried in Thornrose Cemetery which was established in 1849. His original stone was placed there, and evidently he, or his family, preferred his rank of "Capt. Robt. Porterfield, 7 Va. Mil. Rev. War" as an epitaph to any other title he later acquired.

When the reinterment ceremony was to take place in 1908, a very small, several generations great grandchild was heard to remark to her father in innocence and of course without grief, fifty-one years after the ninety-one year old General died, "Father, couldn't we have a nice bowl of punch at the ceremony?"

*Mrs. Clarence M. (Bernice Kinney) Rice, Carmi, Illinois.

**Mrs. Bernice Kinney Leslie, Falls Church, Virginia.

Robert Porterfield "was a man of character, strong sense and martial spirit."⁹ No doubt he was a man of volatile disposition, with more than a few enemies, but always respected.

His brother, Charles, was described by Lyon G. Tyler,¹⁰ President John Tyler's son, "as the greatest soldier of the Revolution and first over the wall at Quebec", no doubt an exaggeration, but his life embodied that of bravery and sacrifice, with love of country, which entitled him to be among the greatest.

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"Spring Hill Farm," once known as "Willie's Ford,"
home of Mr. & Mrs. William F. Irons.

Second of a Series

OLD HOMES OF AUGUSTA COUNTY

"WILLIE'S FORD"

now known as

"SPRING HILL FARM"

by Gladys B. Clem

Where the Barterbrook Road (Rt. 635) winds between the hills several miles south of Staunton, stands the old dwelling once known as "Willie's Ford."

For a century or more its name denoted a popular crossing of nearby Christian's Creek as well as the owner's name. Recently the property has been acquired by Mr. and Mrs. William F. Irons who have renamed it "Spring Hill Farm."

The exact age of the house can not be proved but old documents indicate construction was begun in 1806-7. It is located on what was part of the original Beverley grant of 118,491 acres issued to William Beverley of Essex county in September 1736. Almost a century later 300 acres of the grant was conveyed to Isham Johnston by Peter R. Beverley, William Beverley's grandson. As Johnston was a "carpenter and joiner" it is thought construction started during his ownership.

Although the building dates preceded the legal conveyance of land by some two decades, this was not uncommon. Frequently a man did not receive clear title until some years after his home had been built and occupied.

The substantial old house of warm rose shaded brick has withstood the ravages of time as well as a long succession of owners.

Originating with Isham Johnston the list includes John Wayt and Danial Wunderlich, the latter selling to his son-in-law, George Imboden. William M. Simms—supposedly for whom the ford was named—disposed of the property through David S. Bell to Benjamin T. Bagby. Dr. Robert Eve, the succeeding owner sold to Harper Harman. In 1899 it was purchased by J. M. and A. W. Irvine in whose family it remained until 1958 when it was purchased by Timothy Hering. From the Hering heirs the property was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Irons.

The wide entrance door is indicative of the hospitable atmosphere expressed throughout the home. The broad fanlight, that lightens the stairway, points to its delicate spindles and graceful handrail that continues on up to the attic floor.

The well spaced 18 paned windows allows the sun to stream across the wide random width floors. Crusader panelled doors open in to rooms whose deep fireplaces guaranteed ample heat for the past owners as well as providing pleasure for the present ones.

Complete restoration of the dwelling is being effectively accomplished with a keen appreciation and understanding for linking the past to that of the modern present.

200 YEARS AGO

SOME AUGUSTA COUNTY COURT PROCEEDINGS OF 1769

The following attached: 1 smoothing iron, fire shovel, 1 chaff bed.

William Crane beat his master, Henry King—complaint dismissed because Henry was not hurt.

Robert Armstrong, Henry Cresswell and James Bell—to view the most convenient way from Buffalo Gap to Staunton.

Called Court on Jacob, a runaway servant, not guilty of housebreaking but of shooting at children of Alexander Moore—39 lashes.

Widow Elizabeth Black objected to recording of husband's will on grounds that testator was not in his right mind, but the will declared good and Samuel Black qualifies as executor.

Thomas Hughart certifies that as administrator of Joseph King he can find no estate.

Henry and Susanna King summoned to show cause why they do not provide for their children.

John Munks, being committed to jail as a runaway servant, is discharged, nothing appearing against him.

Called Court on James Denniston for housebreaking into shop of John Abney and stealing silver coin—39 lashes.

John Cockrain, son of John Cockrain, deceased, to be bound to Hugh Allen, he teaching him the trade of wheelright and joiner.

Settlement recorded of Robert Shanklin's estate. Paid Jane Logan for 12 gals. whiskey. Paid Joseph Peace for making coffin and (for) planks.

Following orphans of Francis McCown to be bound: Agnes to be bound to John McCown: Francis to Tully Deavitt: Catharine to Robert Christian.

Abraham Christman proposes to build a mill on his own land on Crab Creek.

The Rev. John Jones, (of Augusta Parish) being incapacitated by age and infirmity consented "to accept of fifty pounds and perquisites in full of his salary for ensuing year, and to allow the residue levied for him by agreement to hire a curate to officiate in his stead."

The first division of the territory of Augusta County was made in this year when an act was passed creating the County of Botetourt.

The price of flour in 1769 was (the equivalent) \$5.00 per barrel.

NEWS NOTES FOR THE MEMBERSHIP

by Mary B. Armistead

The Augusta County Historical Society has steadily developed and expanded in its four years of existence.

The Archives Committee, whose current effort is locating, correlating, restoring, binding and cataloguing of old records, has now completed four volumes (1745-1776) under the heading of "Augusta Court in its Executive Capacity". The various categories include: Bonds of Sheriffs and Deputies; Accounts of Court officials—sheriffs, clerks, jailers, etc.; Coroner's Inquests; Nominations for Constables; Tax Collections—Tax Exemptions, Overpayments, Tithables; Court's Welfare Functions—Bankruptcy Petitions, Reimbursements, Indentured Servants, including Runaways; Road and Mill Papers, Land Values and Entries, Bills of Sale; Hemp Valuations; Sole Surviving Marriage Consent.

Dr. Herbert S. Turner, Assistant Archivist, is assembling a card index file of materials that will be of inestimable value to those doing research on Augusta County. Names, places, genealogical material, historical information and interesting facts concerning the early days of the County are listed. Over 1000 items have been recorded, with additions constantly being made.

The splendid work of the Landmark Project, brought to your attention in the last issue (Fall, 1968) has been markedly successful. The owners of the old homes have been most gracious in their cooperation. The series, one in each issue of the Bulletin, will continue.

The recently formed John Lewis Committee has been set up to stimulate appreciation of Staunton's first settler, John Lewis. Under the chairmanship of Ronald L. Steffey, a marker and access road to the long neglected grave have been secured. The gravesite has been cleared and is maintained by Mr. Steffey's history classes from John Lewis' Junior High School. A brochure on Lewis is being prepared for the City of Staunton.

The Society is affiliated with the American Association of State and Local History, with some of the local members attending the national meeting in Washington.

In 1967 the Society became one of the founding organizations of the Virginia Federation of History. In February of this year the Society was represented by Col. Henry Winston Holt at the 3-day seminar on Small Museum Exhibit Techniques held at Richmond's Valentine Museum.

At the Shenandoah Valley Folklore Society Arts and Crafts Festival held at Harrisonburg, Virginia, the Society had a striking display arranged by the Archives Committee, the outstanding feature being a Victorian Christmas tree, decorated with ornaments of that period.

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